

**IN THE CLAIMS:**

1. (Currently Amended) An electronic message configured to be communicated between a sender's device and a recipient's device, the electronic message comprising:

[[a]] an attached sound file ~~attached to the electronic message~~; and [[,]]

[[a]] an attached predetermined identifier ~~attached to the electronic message~~ and associated with the sound file, ~~that the predetermined identifier both distinguishes said~~ comprising:

a distinguishing indication configured to distinguish the sound file from other files attached to the electronic message; and

a course of action indication indicates configured to indicate a course of action to be taken by the recipient's device with ~~said the~~ sound file, the course of action indication comprising an information tag;

wherein based on ~~said the~~ course of action indicated by ~~said the~~ predetermined identifier, ~~said the~~ recipient's device is configured to selectively convert a content of the electronic message from text to voice using at least one of ~~said the~~ sound file and [[/or]] a locally stored voice sample; and

wherein the recipient's device is configured to selectively play at least one of ~~said the~~ sound file and [[/or]] ~~said the~~ converted content of the electronic message.

2. (Original) The method of Claim 1 wherein said sound file contains at least one word in a sender's voice.

3. (Original) The method of Claim 1 wherein said sound file contains at least one word in a computer simulated voice.

4. (Original) The method of Claim 1 wherein said sound file contains at least one word in a computer simulated voice and at least one word in a sender's voice.

5.-6. (Cancelled)

7. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim [[6]] 1 wherein the information tag is embedded in a header of the electronic message.
8. (Currently Amended) A method for sending an electronic message from a sender's device to a recipient's device, the method comprising the steps of:  
attaching a sound file to the electronic message; ~~and~~  
associating a predetermined identifier with ~~said the~~ sound file and attaching ~~said~~  
~~sound file the predetermined identifier~~ to the electronic message, ~~said the~~  
predetermined identifier ~~distinguishes comprising:~~  
a distinguishing indication configured to distinguish said the  
sound file from other files attached to the [[e-mail]] electronic message;  
and indicates  
a course of action indication configured to indicate a course of  
action to be taken by ~~said the~~ recipient's device with ~~said the~~ sound file,  
the course of action indication comprising an information tag;  
based on ~~said the~~ course of action indicated by ~~said the~~ predetermined identifier,  
selectively converting a content of the electronic message from text to voice  
using at least one of ~~said the~~ sound file and [[/or]] a locally stored voice sample;  
and  
selectively playing ~~said~~ at least one of the sound file and [[/or]] ~~said the~~  
converted content of the electronic message.
9. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 8 wherein said attaching is performed by the sender's device.
10. (Original) The method of Claim 8 wherein said attaching is automatic.

11. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 8 wherein said attaching is performed by an adjunct to the sender's device.
12. (Original) The method of Claim 8 wherein said attaching is performed by an e-mail server.
13. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 8 , further comprising: transmitting the electronic message to the recipient's device, wherein said the attaching is performed by the recipient's device.
14. (Original) The method of Claim 8 wherein said sound file contains at least one word in a sender's voice.
15. (Original) The method of Claim 14 wherein said sound file further contains at least one word in a computer simulated voice.
16. (Original) The method of Claim 8 wherein said sound file contains at least one word in a computer simulated voice.
17. (Cancelled)
18. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim [[17]] 8 wherein the information tag is embedded in a header of the electronic message.
19. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 18 wherein the information tag is embedded by the sender's device.
20. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 18 wherein the information tag is embedded by an adjunct to the sender's device.

21. (Original) The method of Claim 18 wherein the information tag is embedded by an e-mail server.
22. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 18 wherein the information tag is embedded by the recipient's device.
23. (Original) The method of Claim 18 where said attaching is selectively performed by a sending party.
24. (Currently Amended) A method for announcing electronic messages, the method comprising the steps of:
- receiving an electronic message with an attached sound file;
  - noting the presence of a predetermined identifier attached to the electronic message, wherein ~~said the~~ predetermined identifier ~~distinguishes said~~ comprises:
    - a distinguishing indication configured to distinguish the sound file
    - from other files attached to the electronic message; and
    - a course of action indication configured to indicate a course of
    - action to be taken with the sound file, the course of action indication
    - comprising an information tag;
  - based on a course of action indicated by ~~said the~~ predetermined identifier,
  - selectively converting a content of the electronic message from text to voice using at least one of ~~said the~~ sound file and [[/or]] a locally stored voice sample; and
  - selectively playing ~~said~~ at least one of the sound file and [[/or]] said converted content of the electronic message in response to the noting of the predetermined identifier.

25. (Original) The method of Claim 24 further comprising receiving at least one more electronic message with an attached sound file and playing said at least one more sound file.
26. (Original) The method of Claim 24 wherein said sound file contains at least one word in a sender's voice.
27. (Original) The method of Claim 24 wherein said sound file contains at least one word in a computer simulated voice.
28. (Original) The method of Claim 24 wherein said sound file contains at least one word in a computer simulated voice and at least one word in a sender's voice.
29. (Cancelled)
30. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim [[29]] 24 wherein the information tag regarding the sound file is embedded in a header of the electronic message.
31. (Original) The method of Claim 30 wherein the information tag is embedded by a sender computer.
32. (Original) The method of Claim 30 wherein the information tag is embedded by an adjunct to a computer at a sending party's end.
33. (Original) The method of Claim 30 wherein the information tag is embedded by an e-mail server.
34. (Original) The method of Claim 30 wherein the information tag is embedded by a recipient computer.

- 35. (Cancelled)
- 36. (Original) The method of Claim 24 where said playing is performed at a recipient computer.
- 37. (Original) The method of Claim 24 where said playing is performed at a recipient customer premise equipment.
- 38. (Original) The method of Claim 24 where said playing is performed at a recipient voice mail.
- 39. (Cancelled)
- 40. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 24 where said converting is performed at an e-mail server.
- 41. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 24 where said converting is performed at a recipient computer.
- 42. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 24 where said converting is performed at an adjunct to a computer at the receiving party's end.
- 43. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 24 where said converting is performed at a voice messaging system.
- 44. (Cancelled)

45. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 24 further comprising transferring said voice message to a voice-mail box.